

News Release



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Stakeholders Roundtable Agrees to Four-Year Extension in California's OHV Program

Legislation has been introduced that would extend the sunset date for California's off-highway recreation program from January 2003 to January 2007.

The measure, AB723, was introduced February 22, 2001 by Assemblyman Juan Vargas.

Many program authorization acts contain sunset clauses to ensure that programs are periodically reviewed. That is the Legislature's way of determining whether a program should be continued, modified or eliminated. California State Park's OHV program has been reviewed and reauthorized since 1982, when the OHV Commission was created. The OHV program's sunset was extended in 1995 until January 1, 2003.

The Stakeholders Roundtable, an advisory group to California State Park's Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division, reached a milestone agreement supporting the sunset date at a February 27 meeting in Sacramento. David L. Widell, the Division's deputy director, called the Vargas bill, "a measurable success of the Stakeholders Roundtable."

As part of their action, Stakeholders said the agreement relates only to the short-term extension of the program, and not to long-term legislation that may be introduced in 2005, pending the results of an updated fuel tax study that will be conducted.

Also as part of the agreement, Stakeholders agreed to "refrain from introducing separate legislation" in 2001. They added, "We believe the bill should include only those provisions to extend the sunset to 2007, unless there is consensus among the OHV Stakeholders on other provisions."

Members of the Roundtable agreed to the extension in part because of an updated fuel tax study that is expected to be completed in 2004. In the past, various aspects of the OHV program's fuel tax income have been criticized. The new fuel tax study will update the data

used to determine the amount of gasoline tax that is credited to the Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund. That data includes a new determination of the concentration of vehicles being used and the amount of gasoline consumed by a broad range of vehicles. The OHV program receives fuel tax income attributable only to the gasoline used by motor vehicles while they are being operated off paved roads for recreation, or in pursuit of recreation, on public lands.

The Stakeholders Roundtable, an ambitious undertaking which was convened last May by State Parks, is a diverse group of more than 50 members that includes representatives from environmental and off-highway organizations, law enforcement officials, federal land managers, the OHV manufacturing industry and non-motorized users, all of whom have a critical stake in this special form of recreation. The Stakeholder meetings are precedent-setting because they mark the first time in 30 years that such a diverse group has been assembled in one place on OHV issues.

Members include: Paul Spitler of the California Wilderness Coalition; Karen Schambach of the Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation; George Barnes of the Sierra Club; Bill Dart, American Motorcycle Association District 36; Don Klusman, California Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs; Ed Waldheim, California Off Road Vehicle Association; Dana Bell, National OHV Conservation Council; Ron Rawlings, California-Nevada Snowmobile Association; Dave Oakleaf, American Motorcycle Association District 37; and Jim McGarvie, San Diego Off-Road Coalition.

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